

Consumer Reports Health BEST BUY DRUGS

Free Guidance for Consumers on Prescription Medicines



NEWS UPDATE

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Prevention treatment for migraine attacks: One medicine stacks up well

If you're among the one in 10 Americans who regularly suffers from migraines, you'll know that pain relief sometimes isn't enough. In fact, overuse of pain relievers can make your symptoms worse.

To prevent migraines from occurring, there are four FDA-approved drugs: propranolol (Inderal and generic) and timolol (both beta-blockers); and topiramate (Topamax and generic) and valproic acid (Depakote and generic), which are both anticonvulsants.

However, there's another group of drugs, called tricyclic antidepressants, that are sometimes prescribed for migraine prevention. They're not approved by the FDA for this purpose (they're prescribed "[off-label](#)"). One of these, [amitriptyline](#), has been well-researched and has consistently reduced the frequency of migraine attacks in studies. [Should you consider taking this drug, or any other to help prevent your migraines? Read on for more information.](#)

Osteoporosis drugs popular, but come with mounting concerns

If you've been diagnosed with osteoporosis, your doctor will probably prescribe a bisphosphonate, which is a class of drugs that helps preserve and build bone.

But research has found that bisphosphonates offer only modest benefits in building bone and preventing fractures. And growing evidence links the drugs to a long list of worrisome side effects—including bone loss. There's an added urgency too, since many doctors have started prescribing bisphosphonates for pre-osteoporosis (osteopenia), even though it's not clear that they are effective for this less serious, but more common condition.

[Is a drug to treat your osteoporosis or osteopenia right for you?](#)

Beware: Dangerous name confusion with Maalox Total Relief

If you bought any Maalox product recently, you should double check to make sure you got the one you expected.

The Food and Drug Administration warned consumers recently about potential mix-ups between Maalox products that have similar names and packaging, but treat completely different conditions. For example, several Maalox liquid antacids treat heartburn, such as Maalox Advanced Regular Strength and Maalox Advanced Maximum Strength. Another product, Maalox Total Relief, treats upset stomach and diarrhea but not heartburn.

Mistaking **Maalox Total Relief** for one of the antacid products could lead to serious side effects, because its active ingredient ([bismuth subsalicylate](#)) is similar to aspirin, which can cause side effects including bleeding. This means it should not be taken by people with a history of gastrointestinal ulcer disease or a bleeding disorder.

[Read on for the full story.](#)

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